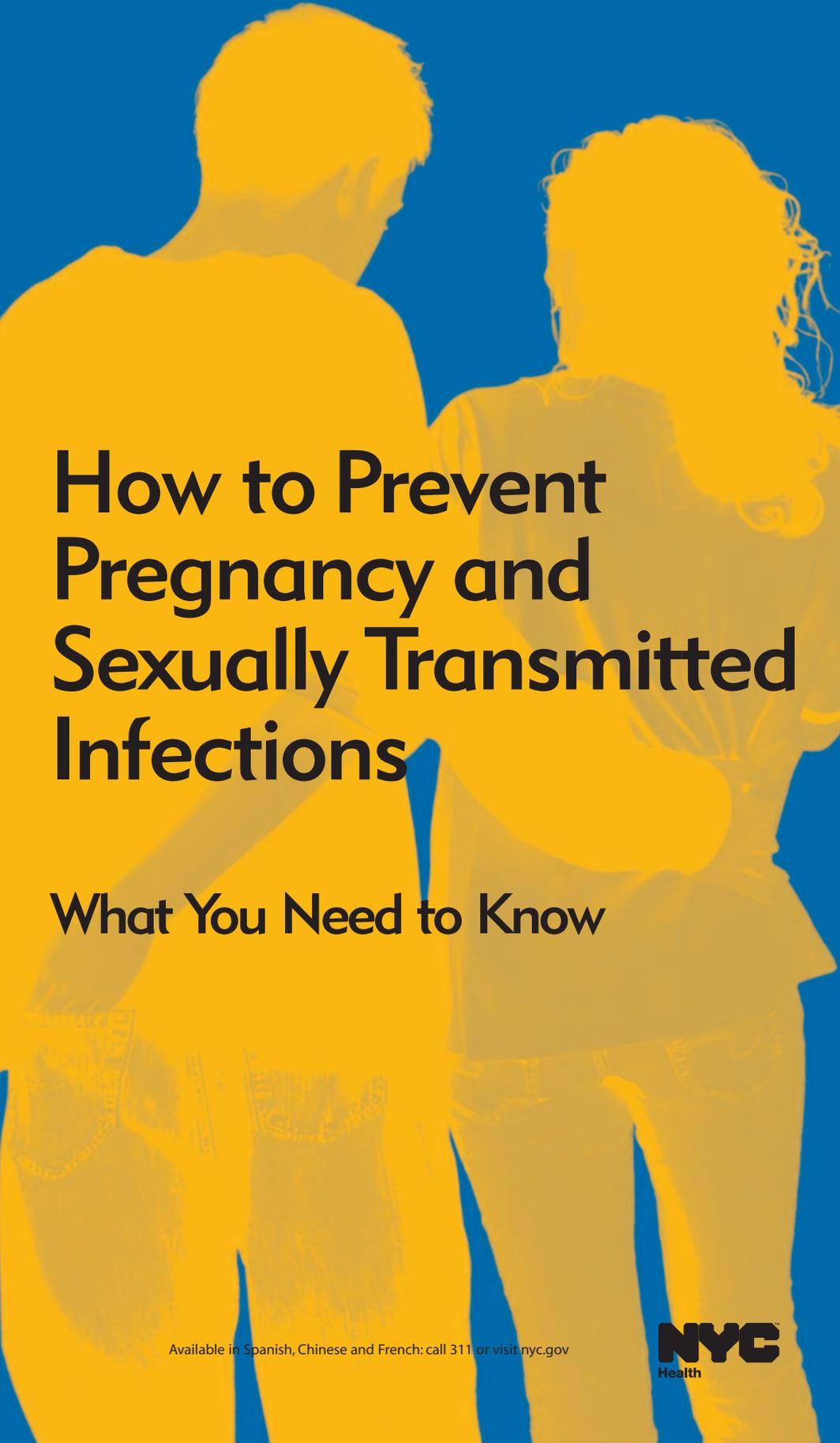


Health Bulletin

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

#90 in a series of Health Bulletins on issues of pressing interest to all New Yorkers



How to Prevent Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections

What You Need to Know

The best ways to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections

1. Don't have sex.

- The only sure way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections is not to have sexual intercourse.
- You won't be the only one; more than half of public high school students say they have not had sex.
- Even if some of your friends have sex, it doesn't mean you have to.
- If you're not sure you're ready for sex, it's better to wait. Someone who really cares for you won't pressure you.
- You can say "no" now – even if you said "yes" before.

2. If you're sexually active, use birth control *and* condoms every time.

- If you're sexually active, or think you will be soon, be prepared with birth control *and* condoms.
- Hormonal birth control methods are almost 100% effective when used correctly – and very safe for most girls:
 - Birth control pills ("The Pill")
 - A patch
 - A vaginal ring
 - An injection you get every 3 months (Depo Provera)
 - An implant that lasts up to 3 years (Implanon)
 - An IUD (intrauterine device) that works up to 5 years (Mirena) (A non-hormonal, copper IUD, ParaGard, is also available and works up to 10 years.)
- Always use a condom (see BYOC = Bring Your Own Condom). Condoms prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, including chlamydia and gonorrhea.



Where to Get Birth Control

- Get birth control from your health care provider, community health center or family planning clinic.
- Call 311 or go to nyc.gov and search for NYC Teen to find out how to get free or low-cost birth control and other confidential health services.

BYOC = Bring Your Own Condom

- Always have condoms available, just in case.
- Use one every time, no matter what kind of birth control you use.
- It's important to use condoms for vaginal *and* anal sex. (Anal sex carries a high risk of spreading HIV.)
- Condoms prevent pregnancy *and* protect against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, including chlamydia and gonorrhea.
- It's easy to find free condoms. Here's how:
 - Visit nyc.gov and search for **condoms**, or **call 311**.
 - If you go to a public high school, get free condoms from your health resource room. If your school has a health center, you can get free condoms there, too.



Emergency contraception can prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex.

But you have to act fast.

- Emergency contraception is sometimes called the “morning-after pill.” Plan B and Next Choice are common brands. Ask your pharmacy what’s available. Both are effective, but one may cost less.
- Emergency contraception prevents pregnancy after unprotected sex or if a condom breaks. It can also be used after forced sex (see You Can Decide).
- Emergency contraception will *not* cause an abortion. If you’re already pregnant, emergency contraception won’t work.
- The most common emergency contraception, such as Plan B and Next Choice, works best when taken within 72 hours (3 days or fewer) after unprotected sex. It may work up to 5 days after sex.
- Emergency contraception is not as effective as regular birth control in preventing pregnancy. If you’re sexually active, the best way to prevent pregnancy is to use regular birth control *and* a condom every time.

Keep emergency contraception around just in case.

- Ask your health care provider for a pill-pack in advance. You may need it if your pharmacy or provider’s office is closed.
- Health Department STD clinics offer emergency contraception at no cost within 72 hours (3 days or fewer) after unprotected sex. **Call 311** for a clinic near you.
- Anyone 17 or older can get emergency contraception pills from a pharmacist without a prescription.
- For a list of pharmacies where emergency contraception is available, go to not-2-late.com. Call before you go, to make sure the pharmacy has it in stock.
- Women 16 and younger still need a prescription, but laws are changing. For up-to-date information, talk to your provider, visit your clinic or see More Information and Help.

You Can Decide

It's your choice whether or not to have sex.

- If you decide to have sex, be prepared with birth control and condoms.
- Forced sex is rape, and rape is a crime.
- For help and support, call **311** or **800-621-HOPE** (800-621-4673).
- **CALL 911 IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER.**

If you become pregnant, you can decide what to do:

Continue the pregnancy, end the pregnancy with an abortion or choose adoption.

You have the right to confidential services.

People 17 and younger have a legal right in New York to get any of these health services without the permission or knowledge of their parents, guardians or anyone else:

- Birth control, including condoms
- Emergency contraception
- Pregnancy tests
- HIV tests
- Testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy care
- Abortion

For free or low-cost confidential health services, call **311** or visit nyc.gov and search for **NYC Teen**. If your school has a health center, you can get services there, too.



Get Tested for Chlamydia

- Chlamydia is very common in New York City, especially among teens.
- You can have chlamydia and not know it – so it's important to get tested once a year and before having sex with someone new.
- For information about where to get tested for chlamydia and other sexually transmitted infections, call **311** or visit nyc.gov and search for **NYC Teen**.

Talk to Your Parents

- Try to talk openly with your parents about sex and other things. Be ready to talk if they ask. Try not to shut them out.
- If you feel you can't talk with your parents, find an adult you trust, like an older brother or sister, a relative or a family friend. Or talk to a counselor or health care provider.

More Information and Help

Call 311 or visit nyc.gov and search for **NYC Teen** for information and referrals, including free or low-cost:

- Health insurance from neighborhood health care providers
- Birth control, including condoms
- Emergency contraception (you can also visit not-2-late.com)
- Abortion services
- HIV counseling and testing, and testing and care for other sexually transmitted infections
- Sexual assault (rape) services

New York City Domestic Violence Hotline: 311 or 800-621-HOPE (800-621-4673)

For help with depression or alcohol or drug problems: Call 311 or LifeNet: 800-LifeNet (800-543-3638), 877-AYUDESE (Spanish) or 877-990-8585 (Mandarin, Cantonese and Korean)

ALWAYS CALL 911 IN AN EMERGENCY.

**DIAL
311**

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